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ART. VI.—*Life and Letters of JOHN WINTHROP, Governor of the Massachusetts-Bay Company at their Emigration to New England, 1630.* By ROBERT C. WINTHROP. Boston: Ticknor and Fields. 1864. 8vo. pp. xii. and 452.

IT is not often that the life of a distinguished man can be written, more than two centuries after his death, from inedited papers which have remained in the family archives for six or seven generations, untouched and wellnigh forgotten. But this piece of good fortune has fallen to the author of the volume now before us, the latest and best biographer of our Governor Winthrop. The first thought of writing his ancestor's life, as we learn from the introductory chapter, occurred to him shortly after his return from a visit to the ancient family seat at Groton, in Suffolk, England. While he was there, he made some inquiries respecting the family, in order to ascertain how far their personal history was known in a place where his ancestors had been for many years lords of the manor. In answer to his questions he was told, among other strange things, that the Winthrops were regicides, who had fled from their native country to escape the punishment of their crime. Inspired in part by the absurdity of this tradition to render an act of filial justice to his progenitors, and in the belief that the time had come for the publication of a more minute and satisfactory account of the life and character of John Winthrop than any which had hitherto appeared, he at once set about the preparation of such a memoir. Considerable progress was made in the execution of this design; and some of the chapters in the volume now published are printed in the precise form in which they were written, fifteen or sixteen years ago. The work was then laid aside, under the pressure of other duties and responsibilities; and it was not resumed until the author's return from a second visit to England in 1860. About this time an immense mass of family papers came into Mr. Winthrop's possession on the death of a kinsman residing at New London, in Connecticut, where they had remained undisturbed through several generations. To the examination of these papers he devoted himself with the zeal of an antiquary,

stimulated as he proceeded by the gratifying discovery that they throw a flood of light on the private life and character of his eminent ancestor.

The result of his labor appears in the very interesting volume before us, in which Mr. Winthrop has, wherever it was possible, allowed the Governor to tell his own story in his own words, thus giving to the memoir much of the charm of an autobiography. At the same time, he has connected the letters and other documents with which his volume is abundantly enriched by a very clear and admirably written narrative, and has further illustrated them by short explanatory notes, wherever such elucidation is required. Beside the letters and other papers now printed for the first time, our author has also inserted in his narrative such of the letters in the Appendix to Mr. Savage's edition of "The History of New England" as are available for his present purpose. In the new letters the original spelling has been retained, while in those first published by Mr. Savage it is modernized, so that every reader will be able at a glance to determine whether any paper is new or has already appeared in print.

In the volume now before us Mr. Winthrop has brought his selection from the Governor's correspondence down to the period of his embarkation for America : for the illustration of the latter part of his ancestor's life, there remain among the family papers some original letters and other documents which will probably be given to the public hereafter in a second volume. Meanwhile this volume exhibits, in the most ample and satisfactory manner, the circumstances under which Winthrop's character was formed and developed, and "displays, in greater detail, perhaps, than can be found anywhere else, not merely his outward life, but his inmost thoughts and motives and principles." Availing ourselves of the opportunity thus afforded, we design in the present article to give some account of the early life of Governor Winthrop, to show how far his previous training had qualified him to be the chief in the settlement of a new country, and to trace to their source in a well-developed Christian character the admirable qualities which he afterward exhibited as Governor of the Massachusetts-Bay Colony.

The name of Winthrop may be found in county records and
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other documents as far back as the beginning of the thirteenth century ; but it is not until a much later period that we have any positive information concerning that branch of the family from which John Winthrop was derived. From an early period in their history they appear to have resided in the county of Suffolk, on the eastern coast of England, and to have been possessed of some landed property. It was probably, however, with the view of improving his fortune, that Adam Winthrop, the grandfather of John Winthrop, went up to London at the age of seventeen, and bound himself as an apprentice to a clothier or clothworker in that city. Here he rose to wealth and influence, being chosen in 1551 Master of the Clothworkers' Company, one of the most famous of the London guilds. After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII., he received a grant of the manor of Groton in the county of Suffolk, formerly belonging to the monastery of Bury St. Edmond's. In this obscure little village, which has since acquired so much interest for every student of our colonial history, he probably spent a part of every year during the latter portion of his life ; and here he was buried on his death, in 1562, at the age of seventy-four. His portrait, which has been engraved for the volume before us, represents a person of strongly marked features, with a serious and somewhat stern expression, indicating, as it should seem, a resolute will and a fearless temper.

His youngest son, also named Adam, was a scarcely less noticeable person, and was born in London on the 10th of August, 1548. Few particulars of his early life have come down to our time ; but it is certain that his education was not neglected, and, as both of his parents died before he was seventeen, it is not unlikely that his moral and intellectual training was watched over by his elder sister, Lady Mildmay, who was evidently a woman of marked ability. Of his later life we have some very curious and interesting glimpses in "The Life and Letters of John Winthrop," especially in the Appendix, which consists of extracts from a diary kept by him for many years, and now first printed, with some extracts from the family almanacs. His profession was that of a lawyer, but he never rose to distinction at the bar, and his practice could not have been very extensive, if we may judge

by the small amount of his “gaynes in law” during the year 1594,—only seven or eight pounds, as appears from his own record. After this period he resided for the greater part of the time at Groton, and devoted himself mainly to agricultural pursuits. For many years he held the office of Auditor at Trinity College, Cambridge, and during the whole or a part of the same period he was also Auditor of St. John’s College. His diary shows him to have been a man of strong religious principles, punctual in the discharge of his various duties, and of much general information; and he had, moreover, “some humble pretensions as a poet.” His verses, indeed, which have been preserved among the family papers or in the British Museum, possess little merit, and are chiefly of interest for the light which they throw on his personal character. He was twice married; and by his second wife, the daughter of Henry Browne of Edwardston, clothier; he had five children, four daughters and one son, John Winthrop, afterward Governor of Massachusetts. He died at Groton in 1623, at the age of seventy-five.

His third child, and only son, was born at Edwardston on the 12th of January, 1587, Old Style, or the 22d of January, 1588, according to our present method of computing time. Of the first fifteen or sixteen years of young Winthrop’s life we know almost nothing; and, from the failure of previous inquirers to find his name on the books of either of the great Universities, it has been commonly supposed that he did not enter college. But among the new facts for which we are indebted to the researches of his descendant is a memorandum showing that he was entered of Trinity College, Cambridge, on the 8th of December, 1602; and there is also evidence that he continued at the University for about a year and a half. While he was at Cambridge he was attacked by a slow fever, from which he suffered severely, and which produced a marked effect on his character. “Being deprived of my youthful joys,” he says in a record of his Christian experience drawn up many years afterward, “I betook myself to God, whom I did believe to be very good and merciful, and would welcome any that would come to him, especially such a young soul, and so well qualified as I took myself to be; so as I took pleasure

in drawing near to him." The early termination of his college life, however, was probably owing, not to ill-health, but to his marriage, which took place at Great Stambridge on the 16th of April, 1605, when he was but little more than seventeen. The lady whom he had thus early chosen as his wife was Mary, the daughter and sole heir of John Forth, Esq., of Great Stambridge, in the county of Essex. She was about four years older than her husband; but, as her family possessed both wealth and influence, the disparity of years was easily overlooked. By his marriage he acquired "a large portion of outward estate"; and to the associations to which it introduced him he attributes still greater benefits. "About eighteen years of age," he says, in the record of his religious life already cited, "being a man in stature and understanding, as my parents conceived me, I married into a family under Mr. Culverwell's ministry in Essex; and, living there sometimes, I first found the ministry of the word come home to my heart with power (for in all before I found only light); and after that I found the like in the ministry of many others, so as there began to be some change, which I perceived in myself, and others took notice of." His chief satisfaction was now found in the contemplation of heavenly things, and in the assiduous performance of the various duties of a Christian life. Such, indeed, was his insatiable thirst after the word of God, as he tells us, that he "could not miss a good sermon, though many miles off, especially of such as did search deep into the conscience."

Not long after his marriage, according to the family tradition preserved by Cotton Mather, he was made a justice of the peace; and in October, 1609, he held his first court at Groton Hall, "doubtless in consequence of his having attained his majority in the early part of that year," says his biographer. Of the next six or eight years of his life we have few details, except such as relate to his spiritual growth and experience. His wife, who died in June, 1615, bore him six children, three sons and three daughters, the eldest of whom, John Winthrop, Jr., became Governor of Connecticut, and is aptly described by Mr. Savage, in a note to "The History of New England," as "the heir of all his father's talents, prudence, and virtues,

with a superior share of human learning." None of Winthrop's letters to his first wife have been preserved; and there is only one short note to her "sweet husband" among the family papers. It is of little importance, and throws no light on a character of which every reader would be glad to know more.

Six months after the death of his wife, Winthrop married again. His second wife was Thomasine, the daughter of William Clopton, Esq., of Castleins, near Groton, a representative of one of the oldest and most respectable families in England. She appears to have been a person of much worth of character, of deep religious convictions, and of a tender and affectionate nature; and her husband may well have looked forward to many years of domestic happiness. But his second experience of married life was suddenly terminated by her death, in a little more than a year after their marriage. A curious and instructive account of her sickness, drawn up by her husband at the time, has been preserved among the family papers, and is printed for the first time in the "Life and Letters." In it, as Winthrop's biographer remarks, "the hopes and fears, the prayers and watchings, the wandering thoughts and delirious fancies, 'the temptations of the enemy,' the parting words, the passing bell, the last sighs and tears, are all recounted with a pathos and a vividness which almost make us witnesses of the scene and partakers of the sorrow." The whole narrative affords new and striking evidence of the strength and tenderness of Winthrop's nature; but it is too long for quotation in full, and it would be impossible by any extracts to give a just idea of its singular beauty. The closing passage, however, in which the writer briefly delineates his wife's character, may be separated from the rest of the account, and is without doubt a just tribute to her memory.

"She was a woman wise, modest, lovinge, & patient of iniurie; but hir innocent & harmeles life was of most observation. She was truly religious, & industrious therein; plaine hearted, & free from guile, & very humble minded; never so adicted to any outward things (to my iudgm^t) but that she could bringe hir affections to stoope to Gods will in them. She was sparinge in outward shewe of zeale, etc. but hir constant love to good christians, & the best things, wth hir reverent & carefull attendance of Gods ordinances, bothe publique & private, wth hir

care for avoydinge of evill hirselfe, & reprovinge it in others, did plainly shewe that truthe, & the love of God, did lye at the heart. Hir lovinge & tender regard of my children was suche as might well become a naturall mother : ffor hir carriage towards myselfe, it was so amiable & observant as I am not able to expresse ; it had this onely inconvenience, that it made me delight too muche in hir to enjoye hir longe."

Covering nearly the whole of this portion of his life, and extending over many pages of the "Life and Letters," we have a minute and deeply interesting account of his religious experience, now printed for the first time. Unlike the "Christian Experience" already referred to, which was not written until several years after his arrival at Boston, this record is in the form of a journal, and gives an exact description of the writer's feelings at the very period when each part was written. It begins on the 2d of February, 1606,—only ten days before the birth of his eldest son,—and comes down, with but few interruptions, to April, 1620 ; and there are some entries of a later date. Many passages are characterized by that eloquence and fervor which we find in the best religious writings of the seventeenth century ; and throughout it breathes the spirit of sincere and earnest piety. Sometimes, indeed, the writer describes himself, in the language of that age, as utterly base and fallen ; but not seldom we have glowing pictures of the peace and joy experienced only through communion with God. As a history of his inner life during the period in which character is forming and principles are becoming fixed, it possesses an especial value ; and no one can read it without recognizing its importance as an auto-biographical fragment. In reading it, we are more than ever before impressed by Winthrop's peculiar qualifications for the important duty afterward assigned to him ; and even in the most cursory examination, it will be seen how largely his subsequent life was affected by his early religious struggles and aspirations. In one passage, probably written not long after the death of his second wife, he describes the consolations which he derived from prayer and religious reading after that sad event, so that "I founde in one fortnight such an abundant recompense of my losse, as I might saye wth the prophet, O Lord ! thou hast caused my ioye to surmount my grieve an

100 foulde." In another passage, written at a little later period, he speaks of his frequent conflicts with the world and the flesh, and triumphantly adds: "Come life, come deathe; come healthe, come sicknesse; come good reporte or evill reporte; come ioye, come sorrowe; come wealthe, come pov-
ertie; come what may, I will never yield me a prisoner to these enemies, I will never be reconciled unto them, I will never seeke their wealthe nor prosperitie all the dayes of my life; for I knowe that if I enter friendship wth them, they will cause me to eate of their sacrifices, & so wthdrawe my hearte from my God to runne roaminge after them & to committ Idolatrye wth them." And in another and still more noticeable passage, he records that, "havinge been longe wearied wth discontent for want of suche imployment as I could find comfort & peace in, I founde at last that the consonable & constant teachinge of my familye was a speciall businesse, wherein I might please God, & greatly further their & mine own salvation, w^{ch} might be as sufficient incouragement to my studye & labour therein as if I were to teache a publick Congregation; for as to the pleasing of God it was all one, & I perceived that my exercise therein did stirre up in me many considerations & much life of affection, w^{ch} otherwise I should not so often meet wth; so as I purpose, by Gods assistance, to take it as a chiefe parte of my callinge, & to intende it accordingly." On one occasion, while "lookinge over some lettres of kindnesse that had passed between my first wife & me, & beinge thereby affected wth the remembrance of that entire & sweet love that had been sometymes between us," he is led to meditate on the love between Christ and his own soul; and on several other occasions we find him writing in a similar strain. The simplest acts of his daily life, as well as the painful experiences of sickness and sorrow, turned his thoughts toward the unseen world. Still it was only through a various experience of fear and hope, of depression and triumphant confidence, of trembling doubt and assured faith, that he ultimately attained inward peace. As he somewhere writes in this journal, "Sometymes my faithe hathe been so deadhearted in the promises as no meanes could quicken me up to apprehende the mercies of God, although but in the ordinarye sence of

my siñes. At an other tyme againe God hathe lett in upon my heart suche a floud of mercie as in the quickest sight of sinne that ever I had I could not have been brought to make question of pardon." But at all times, when he was struggling with painful doubts as well as when he was rejoicing in hope, we see how deep was his sense of religious obligations, and how earnestly he was striving to bring his outward life into harmony with his own settled convictions of duty. It is seldom that we have so minute a record of any man's spiritual conflicts ; and there are probably few persons whose inmost thoughts and aspirations could be thus exposed to the cold eye of criticism without sinking them somewhat in the general estimation. In the case of Winthrop the result will be different ; and these revelations, evidently meant for no eye but his own, will add new honor to his memory by the light which they throw on his life and character.

Meanwhile, in the early part of 1618, Winthrop again married,—his third wife being Margaret, daughter of Sir John Tyndal, Knight, of Great Maplested, in the county of Essex. Of this lady much more is known than of either of his other wives ; and many of her husband's letters to her, as well as some of her answers, have been preserved. Some of them have been already printed in the Appendix to Mr. Savage's edition of "The History of New England," and others are now given to the public for the first time. They are among the best specimens of epistolary composition in our language, and present a charming picture of domestic peace and joy. Few marriages can have produced greater happiness to both parties than was experienced by Winthrop and his wife during the next twenty-five or thirty years ; but the new alliance was not contracted without serious opposition on the part of the bride's family and friends. Two letters addressed to her by her future husband before their marriage have recently come to light, in the first of which he urges his suit with great warmth, and combats the objections apparently urged against him on the ground of the smallness of his fortune. In the course of the letter, which is very long, and largely occupied with references to the Scriptures, he writes somewhat quaintly with regard to her acceptance of him in spite of the opposition of her friends.

" But nowe doe I knowe that thou lovest me, & heerby we may bothe be fully assured that this thinge comethe of the Lorde : Therefore it is my desire to confirme thy heart in this resolutiō ; not that I feare any change (farre be suche a thought from me) but for that I wishe thee a large additiō of comfort to thy constancie, w^{ch} may molifie & heale up the scarres of such wounds as may yet remaine of thy late conflicte. And now I will take lib^{tie} to deale freely wth thee since there is no need of persuasiō, nor any feare of suspiciō of flaterye ; & let me tell thee that as thou hast doone worthyly & Christianly, so thou hast doone no otherwise than became thee being one professinge to feare God & believe in him : for (what so ever I am or may be, yet) beinge, in thy accompt, a servant of God & one that thou mightest well hope to be furthered to heaven by (Amen I say), & beinge offred unto thee by God, & thy selfe beinge as warrantably called to embrace the opportunitye as a woman might be, I see not how thou couldst have had peace to thine owne heart if thou hadst refused it ; but thou mightest iustly have feared least, for wthdrawinge thy heart from God & leaninge to thine owne reason, he should have given thee over to some suche matche as should have proved a plague to thy soule all thy dayes."

And he closes by bidding her to be patient and hopeful.

" Whatsoever shall be wantinge of that w^{ch} thy love deserves, my kindest affection shall endeavour to supplie, whilst I live, & what I leave unsatisfied (as I never hope to be out of thy debt) I will sett over to Him who is able, & will recompence thee to the full : & for the present, I wish thee to followe the prophets exhortatiō Psal: 27. 14. Waite on the Lord, be of good courage, & he shall strengthen thyne heart ; Waite I say on the Lorde."

In the second letter he offers some suggestions as to her bridal apparel, which, one would think, could scarcely have been acceptable to her, and which probably would not be very pleasing to most ladies at the present day. But, as his biographer justly observes, "the Scriptural allusions and applications which are introduced so abundantly into this letter are still more remarkable." They are even more frequent here than in any of his other letters, and they show at once the writer's familiarity with the Bible, and the smallness of the distinction then made as to the canonical value of its different books, since most of its references are to the "Song of Solomon." This singular production appears to have been a favorite with Winthrop, and he often quotes from it, but nowhere else so copiously as in this letter.

After his marriage Winthrop passed a considerable part of each year in London in the practice of his profession as a lawyer, and in closely watching the course of public affairs. During these frequent periods of absence he seems to have lost no opportunity of communicating with his family ; and his numerous letters to his wife and his eldest son, though often brief and hurried, reveal great strength and depth of affection. They seldom mention political transactions, and add few facts to what was already known of his personal history ; but they will be read with interest for their unconscious delineation of his character as a husband and father, and in one or two instances we gather from them a satisfactory solution of some obscure statement in letters heretofore published. Thus, in a letter of uncertain date, first printed by Mr. Savage, he informs his wife : “ My office is gone, and my chamber, and I shall be a saver in them both. So, as I hope, we shall now enjoy each other again, as we desire. The Lord teach us to improve our time and society to more use for our mutual comfort, and the good of our family, etc., than before.” To what office reference was here made has been a matter of doubt ; but from one of the letters now brought to light we learn that in the latter part of the year 1626 a vacancy occurred in one of the attorneyships of the Court of Wards, for which he was advised by his friends to make immediate application. He was then at Groton, but he seems to have hastened at once to London to take the necessary steps for procuring the desired appointment. In this he was successful ; and it is now known that he held the office until a short time before he left England. The family papers show that he had a large business as a lawyer, and, from the number of cases named in them, it is certain that he must have derived a considerable income from this source. His practice, however, was not confined to the courts, and there is good reason to believe that he was sometimes employed to draft bills for enactment by Parliament.

A few extracts from his familiar correspondence during this period will exhibit its general character better than any minute criticism, and at the same time show how entirely his religion had become a part of his daily life. Our first extract is a letter to his wife, written about three years after their marriage.

" To my most lovinge & deare wife M^r Marg^t Winthrop at Groton in Suffolk.

" **M**Y DEARLY BELOVED WIFE,— the blessinge of o^r heavenly father be upon thee & all o^r: & he who hath preserved & prospered us hitherto, wthout o^r merits of his free goodnesse, continue us in his favour, & the comfort of each others Love, unto o^r last & most happie change. I trust by the blessinge of God to be restored safe to thee on Saturdaye next: for my heart is at home, & specially wth thee my best beloved, yet the businesse I came for is come to no passe, & there is cause to feare lest it will not be effected this week: therefore be not over confident of my returne untill tuesdaye next weeke: but I hope I shall write to thee againe if I be likely to staye. O^r freinds heere are all in healthe: I am much streightened in tyme, & therefore cañot satisfye my selfe in writinge as I desire, gather the rest out of thyne owne faithfull assurance of my Love: so wth the sweetest kisses, & pure imbracinges of my kindest affection I rest

" Thine

" JOHN WINTHROP.

" Remember my dutye to parents & loveinge salutations to suche good freinds as thou knowest I desire, etc.

" LONDON. May 9: 1621."

Three years afterward we find him writing to her in the same affectionate tone, and with the same longing to be again united with his family.

" **M**Y MOST SWEET HEART,— I received thy kinde Lettre, w^{ch} was truely wellcome to me, as a fruit of that love w^{ch} I have (& shall ever) esteemed above silver & golde, & cannot but reioyce more in so kind a testimonie of it, then in the richest present thou couldst have sent me. Now blessed be the Lo: our good God, who giveth us still matter of comfort in each other & in those w^{ch} belongeth to us: onely I am greived for our 2 little Lambes, the Lord keepe them & deliver them in his good tyme. If heer be any thinge w^{ch} may be good for them I will not forgett them. I prayse God we are all heer in health, & salute thee heartily, wishinge thee heer ofte if it could be. Newes heer is none certaine. I purpose (if God will) to be at Graces on Saterday at night, & so to be at home on mundaye. In the meane tyme I cease not to comende thee & all o^r familie to the gratious blessinge & protection of o^r heavenly father, & so wth my dutye to my mother, blessinge to o^r children, & salutations to all etc, I kisse my sweet wife & remaine allwayes

" thy faithfull husband

" JOHN WINTHROP.

" Wells bringes downe a trusse.

" LONDON Octob: 30 1624."

In all his letters to his wife there breathes the same tender and affectionate spirit ; and from her letters to him we see that his frequent absences from home were equally regretted by both husband and wife. There is scarcely a letter in which he does not express his anxiety to be with his family ; while Mrs. Winthrop frequently tells him that she has sent by the carrier “a cupple of capons,” some “cyder,” or other present from the produce of their farm. The great charm of these letters comes, indeed, quite as much from their affectionate tone as from the perfect simplicity and frankness with which they are written. There is no attempt at fine writing, but each says what will most interest the other to learn. Winthrop himself was evidently fond of writing, and many of his letters are of considerable length : his wife, on the other hand, is generally brief, and doubtless preferred the faithful performance of her household duties to any other occupation. In the letters of both we find abundant evidence of that deep sense of religious obligations of which we have already spoken.

Beside the letters from Winthrop and his wife, there are in the volume several from other members of the family, and a few from persons with whom they were connected only by business or friendship. Some of these letters are of much intrinsic interest ; but, as they afford little illustration of the special characteristics which we design to bring into view in this article, it will be more in accordance with our purpose to extract one of Winthrop’s letters to his son, while the former was at home, and the latter in London.

“ To my lovinge sonne John Winthrop at the three fawnes in the Olde Baylye,
London.

“ SONNE JOHN,— I prayse God we came home well on thursdaye
at night & this daye I was at the Choyce of o^r knights at Ipswich ; what
o^r successe was you may knowe by my lettre to either of yo^r unckles, as
likewise for other affaires. I purpose now to send you up the rest of
the writings, w^{ch} Mr. ffeatherston may make use of, as he shall think fitt :
I would be lothe to come up before the terme except there be necessi-
tye : yet I thineke to be there about a weeke before, because my horse
must be at Houndsloe heathe the 23 of Aprill, & likewise to take order
about my removall, w^{ch} I am now (in a mañer) resolved of, if God shall
dispose for us accordingly : for my charge heere grows verye heavye, &

I am wearey of these ioⁿties to & fro, so as I will either remove or putt off my office. I would have you enquire about for a house at Tower hill or some suche open place, or if I cant be provided so neere, I will make tryall of Thistleworthe ; I would be neere churche & some good schoole. If you can finde how to sende to yo^r brother Hen : let me knowe that I may provide shoes &c : for him, & for other things I will leave them to yo^r care. We are all in good healthe (I prayse God). Deane hathe had the smale poxe, but laye not by it, & Sam^l was verye sick & in great danger, but God hathe delivered him. Yo^r grandmother & mother salute & blesse you : the Lorde blesse, guide, & prosper you in all yo^r wayes, that you may feare him & cleave to him, & so consecrate yo^r life & youthe to his service, as yo^r life may be of use for his glorie & the good of others. farewell.

“ Yo^r lovinge father

“ Jo : WINTHROP.

“ Remember me verye kindly to Capt. Best & his wife, to Capt. Downinge & the rest of that familiye (when you see them.) Comende me to Mr. ffeatherston & desire him to prepare his assurance by a weeke before the terme, if he thinke good, & if yo^r host shall require it ; otherwise at the beginninge of the terme.

“ Looke out amonge the booke sellers in Duck lane, & if you can finde an English bible in 4^{to} for 7 or 8^s : buye it & sende it downe ; & remember the stockfishe.

“ FEB : 25. 1627.”

This letter has a special interest, as showing that, only two years before his embarkation, Winthrop had little or no thought of coming to New England, though his mind had long been troubled by the sad condition of affairs at home, and that his frequent journeys to London and back again had become insufferably irksome to him. The intention of giving up his residence at Groton, however, was relinquished ; and in an undated letter from Mrs. Winthrop to her husband we have an amusing statement of her objections to removing to Thisleworth, or Isleworth, as it is now called. Probably the postponement of the removal until spring, which she recommends with so much good sense, caused its ultimate abandonment ; and not long afterward Winthrop began to consider the expediency of seeking a more distant home. In the letter just referred to, Mrs. Winthrop writes : —

“ For the matter of which you right about, of takeinge a house at

Thiselworth, I like well in some respect, in regard of the good Minister and good people and teachinge for our children. But I must aledge one thinge, that I feare in your cominge to and fro, lest if you should be ventrus upon the water, if your passage be by water w^{ch} I know not, it may be dangerous for you in the winter time, the wether beinge colde and the waters perilous. And so I shoulde be in continuall feare of you lest you should take any hurt. I did confir with my mother about it and she thinkes you had better take a house in the City, and so come home to your own table and famillye ; and I am of the same minde, but I shall allwayes submit to what you shal thinke fit. Upon the best consideracion I can take, I have resolved to stay heare this winter, in regard that my littel one is very yonge and the wayes very bad to remove such things as wee shall stande in nede of, and we shal leave things very unsetled, and to keepe two famylies will be very chargable to us, And so I thinke it will be our best corce to remove in the springe, and in the meane time commend it to God. It is allredy reported about the countrie that we shal remove and so it will be the lesse strange to them, because they loke for it all ready, and you are to be so much from home."

About the time of Winthrop's proposed removal from Groton, his eldest son, then a young man of twenty-two or twenty-three, was also thinking about a new home, and was seriously considering the propriety of joining Endicott's company in their proposed emigration to New England. The execution of this design seems to have been postponed by the advice of his father, who, in a letter dated April 7, 1628, writes : "For your journey intended, seeing you have a resolution to go to sea, I know not where you should go with such religious company, and under such hope of blessing ; only I am loath you should think of settling there as yet, but to be going and coming awhile and afterward to do as God shall offer occasion."

After relinquishing this design young Winthrop made a voyage to the Mediterranean, visiting Constantinople, where he passed three months, and returning overland through Italy and Holland. His absence from England lasted more than fourteen months, and it is a striking illustration of the difficulty of postal communication in that age, that during this long period he did not receive a single letter from home, and that he did not hear of his grandmother's death until his arrival in London, four months after that event. So industri-

ous a penman as the elder Winthrop, and one so devoted to his family, could scarcely have failed to write to his son whenever opportunity offered; and the failure of the latter to receive the letters which were doubtless sent has probably deprived us of considerable information respecting an interesting portion of the elder Winthrop's personal history.

The death of his grandmother and of his uncle Fones, which occurred almost simultaneously, one at Groton, and the other in London, were not the only events in the family history during the absence of young Winthrop. About the end of November, 1628, while his father was in attendance on the courts in London, he was taken seriously ill; and such was Mrs. Winthrop's anxiety about her husband's condition, that she set out at once, with no other attendant than a maid-servant, to make the journey from Groton to London, at that time an undertaking of no small difficulty. "I am heere amonge such lovinge friends," he wrote to her, "as will suffer me to want nothinge, especially the Lord beinge pleased to be wth me allso in the favor & light of his countenance; yet were it not winter, I could want thee; but (my sweet wife) have a little more patience & God will restore me to thee soone: I must persuade and chardge thee not to thinke of coīminge up, for, if it should befall thee other wise than well, it would be worse to me than all this, & much more." Nevertheless she was not to be thus dissuaded; and we cannot doubt that her tender care did much to hasten her husband's recovery. After a short time she returned home, leaving him so much better, that at the beginning of the next term of the court he was able to resume his law business. In a striking passage in his little autograph record of his religious experiences during this "dangerous hote malignant feaver," he ascribes various benefits to his sickness, such as his total relinquishment of the use of tobacco, his experience of the love of his friends and acquaintances, and, above all, the assurance of his salvation. It was only a few months after his own recovery that he was called to lament the deaths of his mother and of his brother-in-law, Thomas Fones, to whom he was warmly attached. Less than two months afterward he was deprived of his attorneyship in the Court of Wards, probably on account of his identification

with the Puritans. The letters which he wrote to his wife under these circumstances are well described by his biographer as "full of the loftiest strain of religious faith and devotional fervor"; but several of the best of them have already been printed by Mr. Savage; and we must content ourselves with giving only one, written after the loss of his office, and showing, we think, that as early as June, 1629, he had begun to consider the question of leaving England for a new home. It is as follows:—

"**MY GOOD WIFE,**—Blessed be the Lord or God for his great mercye still continued to us & o^rs. O that we could consider aright of his kindnesse, that we might knowe or happinesse in being the children of such a father, & so tenderly beloved of the All sufficient, but we must needs complaine. Oh this flesh, this fraile sinfull flesh, that obscures the beauty & brightnesse of so great glorye & goodnessse! I thanke thee for thy most kinde & sweet Lettre, the stampe of that amiable affection of a most lovinge wife: I assure thee, thy labour of love (tho' it be very great) shall not be lost, so far as the prayers & endeavours of a faithfull husbande can tende to requitall. But I must limitt the length of my desires to the shortnesse of my leysure, otherwise I should not knowe when to ende. I trust, in the Lorde, the tyme of o^r wished meetinge wilbe shortly, but my occasions are such as thou must have pacience till the ende of next weeke, though I shall strive to shorten it, if possible I maye: and after that, I hope, we shall never parte so longe againe, till we parte for a better meetinge in heaven. But where we shall spende the rest of o^r short tyme I knowe not: the Lorde, I trust, will direct us in mercye; my comfort is that thou art willinge to be my companion in what place or conditiō soever, in weale or in woe. Be it what it may, if God be wth us, we need not feare; his favour, & the kingdome of heaven wilbe alike & happinesse enough to us & o^rs in all places. [torn] is in London, but I have seen him but twice, I knowe not what he doth nor what he intendeth, I mourne for his sinnes & the miserye that he will soone bringe upon himselfe & his wife. Our freinds here are all in health (God be prayded) & desire to be comēnded to thee, so wth my love & blessinge to o^r children, salutatiō to all o^r freinds, my brother & sister Gostlin &c, I comēnde thee to the good Lorde & kisse my sweet wife & rest

"Thy faithfull husband

"**JO : WINTHROP.**

JUNE 22. 1629.

"Send me no horses except I send for them."

It is certain, however, that four or five weeks after the date of this letter the subject of emigrating to New England was distinctly before his mind ; and in the latter part of July he rode into Lincolnshire with his brother-in-law, Emanuel Downing, apparently by the invitation of Isaac Johnson, to consult with him in reference to this great enterprise. Immediately after the return of John Winthrop, Jr., the plan was communicated to him by his father in a letter which has unfortunately been lost. But the son's answer has long been known to the students of our early history, and is a document which does him much honor. "And for myself," he writes, "I have seen so much of the vanity of the world, that I esteem no more of the diversities of countries, than as so many inns, whereof the traveller that hath lodged in the best, or in the worst, findeth no difference, when he cometh to his journey's end ; and I shall call that my country, where I may most glorify God, and enjoy the presence of my dearest friends. Therefore herein I submit myself to God's will and yours, and, with your leave, do dedicate myself (laying by all desire of other employments whatsoever) to the service of God and the Company herein, with the whole endeavors, both of body and mind." In Winthrop's letter was enclosed a paper of "Conclusions," which has not been identified, but the substance of which has doubtless been preserved in at least three different forms ; — first, in the "General Considerations for the Plantation of New England, with an Answer to several Objections," printed in Hutchinson's "Collection of Original Papers" ; next, in a paper in the handwriting of Forth Winthrop, first published in the volume now before us, and entitled "Reasons to be considered for iustifieinge the undertakeres of the intended Plantation in New England, & for incouraginge such whose hartes God shall move to ioyne wth them in it," with a second part entitled "Diverse obiections w^{ch} have been made against this Plantation, wth their answears & Resolutions" ; and lastly, in a paper recently discovered in the State-Paper Office, in London, with the indorsement, "White of Dorchester his instructions for the plantation of New England." Whether Winthrop himself was the author of this important document has been considered doubtful, but his present biog-

raper is decidedly of the opinion that it was originally prepared by him, and afterward submitted to some of his principal associates, from whom the copies in Hutchinson's Collection and in the State-Paper Office were doubtless obtained. In this opinion we entirely concur ; and it is certainly not easy to see how the argument by which it is supported can be answered. Among the Winthrop papers his biographer has found "an original draught of the earlier portion of the paper, with marginal alterations and suggestions, in the handwriting of the elder Winthrop, indorsed, 'For New England, May, 1629,'" and "another portion of the paper in Winthrop's handwriting, distinctly indorsed, 'Objections Answered, *the first draught*,' together with still other autograph manuscripts of his, which were evidently preparations for the same composition." In view of these discoveries, the question of authorship must be regarded as settled beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt on the subject.

Beside this document, two shorter papers of a similar character have also been found in Winthrop's own handwriting, and are now printed for the first time. The first of them is entitled "Some Gen^l Conclusions shewinge that persons of good use heere (yea in publike service) may be transplanted for the furtherance of this plantation in N: E:" and briefly sets forth that the work is lawful, that it must succeed by the efforts of persons suited to such an undertaking, and that to them it presents stronger claims than "the betteringe of the Churche" at home. The other paper is entitled "Particular Considerations in the case of J: W:" and is well worth citing in this connection. We give it at length.

"Particular Considerations in the case of J: W:

" 1 : It is come to that issue as (in all probabilitye) the welfare of the Plantation dependes upon his goeinge, for divers of the Chiefe Undertakers (upon whom the reste depende) will not goe without him.

" 2 : He acknowledges a satisfactorye callinge, outwarde from those of the Plantation, inwardly by the inclination of his own hearte to the worke, & bothe approved by godly & iudicious Devines (whereof some have the first interest in him), & there is in this the like mediate call from the Kinge, which was to his former employmet.

" 3 : Though his means be sufficient for a comfortable subsistence in

a private condition heere, yet the one halfe of them being disposed to his 3: elder sonnes, who are now of age, he cannot live in the same place & callinge with that which remains ; his charge being still as great as before, when his means were double : & so if he should refuse this opportunitye, that talent which God hath bestowed upon him for publike service, were like to be buried.

" 4 : His wife & suche of his children, as are come to years of discration, are voluntaryye disposed to the same Course.

" 5 : Most of his friends (upon the former considerations) doe consent to his change."

When these papers were drawn up, it is probable that Winthrop had fully made up his mind to emigrate to New England ; and only a few days after the date of his son's letter relative to the " Conclusions," the father's signature was affixed to the memorable Agreement at Cambridge. By this important paper each of the signers, who were twelve in number, bound himself, " in the word of a Christian, and in the presence of God, who is the searcher of all hearts," to be ready to embark for New England, with such of his family as were to accompany him, by the 1st of the following March, " Provided always, that, before the last of September next, the whole Government, together with the patent for the said Plantation, be first, by an order of Court, legally transferred and establisched to remain with us and others which shall inhabit upon the said Plantation."

One month before this Agreement was entered into, certain propositions had been submitted at a General Court of the Massachusetts-Bay Company by its Governor, Matthew Cradock, with the express design of transferring the government of the plantation to New England, instead of continuing it " in subordination to the Company " in London ; and it was doubtless with the view of influencing the final decision of the question that the Agreement was drawn up and signed. At the next General Court of the Company, held two days after the date of this important paper, the Deputy-Governor informed the Court " that the especial cause of their meeting was to give answer to divers gentlemen, intending to go into New England, whether or no the chief government of the Plantation, together with the patent, should be settled in New England, or

here." After some discussion of the subject, two committees were appointed to draw up arguments for and against the proposed transfer, with instructions to report to the full Court on the following morning. This was done, and after an animated debate the Company voted "by erection of hands," "that the government and patent should be settled in New England," and an order was thereupon drawn up for carrying out this vote, perhaps the most important resolution ever adopted by any corporate body. Less than two months afterward, the Court, as the records set forth, "having received extraordinary great commendations of Mr. John Winthrop, both for his integrity and sufficiency, as being one every way well fitted and accomplished for the place of Governor," chose him the first Governor under the new system. Mr. John Humfrey, another signer of the Agreement at Cambridge, was at the same time chosen Deputy-Governor; and eighteen Assistants were also selected, of whom the most prominent were Sir Richard Saltonstall, Isaac Johnson, Thomas Dudley, John Endicott, and William Coddington.

On the very day of the election, Winthrop announced the result to his wife in a letter which is too characteristic of the writer not to be inserted here.

"To my verye lovinge Wife, M^r Winthrop the elder at Groton, Suff^k

"MY DEARE WIFE,—I am verye sorye that I am forced to feed thee wth lettres, when my presence is thy due, & so much desired: but my trust is, that he who hath so disposed of it, will supply thee wth patience, & better conforte in the want of him whom thou so much desirest: The Lord is able to doe this, & thou mayst expect it, for he hath promised it. Seeinge he calls me into his worke, he will have care of thee & all o^r & o^r affaires in my absence: therefore I must sende thee to him, for all thou lackest: goe boldly (sweet wife) to the throne of Grace; if anythinge trouble thee, acquainte the Lord wth it; tell him, he hath taken thy husband from thee, pray him to be a husband to thee, a father to thy children, a master to thy householde, thou shall finde him faithfull: thou art not guilty of my departure, thou hast not driven me awaye by any unkindnesse, or want of dutye, therefore thou mayst challenge protection & blessinge of him.

"I prayse the Lorde I am in health & cheerfull in my course, wherein I find God gratiouly present, so as we expect, he wilbe pleased to direct & prosper us. We have great advantage because we have many prayers.

" Bee not discouraged (deare heart) though I sett thee no tyme of my returne ; I hope it shall not be longe, & I will make no more staye then I needs must.

" So it is that it hath pleased the Lorde to call me to a further trust in this businesse of the Plantation, then either I expected or finde my-selfe fitt for, (beinge chosen by the Company to be their Governor). The onely thinge that I have comforte of in it is, that heerby I have assurance that my charge is of the Lorde & that he hath called me to this worke : O that he would give me an heart now to answeare his goodnesse to me, & the expectation of his people ! I never had more need of prayers, helpe me (deare wife) & lett us sett o^r hearts to seeke the Lorde, & cleave to him sincearly.

" My brother & sisters salute you all : my sonne remembers his dutye to thee, & salutations to all the rest. Comende me kindly to all o^r freinds at Groton hall, & to M^r Leigh & his wife, my neighbo^r Cole & his wife, o^r freinds at Castleins & all that love us. So the Lorde blesse thee & all o^r children & companye. So I kisse my sweet wife & rest

" thy faithfull husband

" Jo : WINTHROP.

" ОСТОВ : 20, 1629.

" I would faine knowe if thou shalt be like to goe wth me, for thou shalt never have so good opportunity. Let John enq^r out 2 : or 3 : Carpenters : & knowe how many of o^r neighbo^rs will goe, that we may provide shippes for them."

Immediately after the election Winthrop entered on the discharge of his new duties ; and during the autumn and winter he was busily occupied in making the necessary preparations for embarking with a large company as soon as the spring opened. Yet he found time to write many letters to his wife, who remained at Groton while he was in London, all of them breathing the tenderest affection for her, and the most entire trust in God. Several of them have already been printed by Mr. Savage, and we had marked for citation three or four of those which are now first printed ; but our extracts have already been so copious, that we have room for only one more. It is, however, one of the most interesting and characteristic of the letters written at this time.

" To my verye loving Wife Mrs. Winthrop the elder at Groton, Suffolk.

" LONDON March 10: 1629.

" MINE OWNE, MINE ONELY, MY BEST BELOVED,— Methinkes it is verye longe since I sawe or heard from my beloved, & I misse all-

readye the sweet comfort of thy most desired presence: but the rich mercye & goodnesse of my God makes suplye of all wants: Blessed be his great & holy name. Ah my good wife, we now finde what blesinge is stored up in the favour of the Lorde; he only sweetens all conditions to us, he takes our cares & feares from us, he supports us in our dangers, he disposeth all our affaires for us, he will guide us by his counsell in our pilgrimage, & after will bringe us to glorye.

“ John is returned from S: Hampton, where he lefte our boyes well & merrye: & this morninge we are ridinge thither, & from thence I shall take my last farewell of thee till we meet in new E: or till mid-somer that it please God our shippes returne. My deare wife be of good courage, it shall goe well with thee & us, the hairs of thy head are numbred, he who gave his onely beloved to dye for thee, will give his Angells charge over thee: therefore rayse up thy thoughts, & be merrye in the Lorde, labour to live by thy Faith; if thou meet with troubles or difficultyes, be not dismayed; God doth use to bringe his children into the streights of the redd sea &c, that he may shew his power & mercye in makinge a waye for them: All his courses towards us, are but to make us knowe him & love him; the more thy heart drawes towards him in this, the freer shall thy condition be from the evill of Affliction.

“ Our friends heer are all in health (blessed be God) & desire to be heartily comended to thee. I am exceedingly beholdinge to my good brother & sister D, I can fasten no recompence upon them for all the chardge my selfe & my company have putt them to. I have received much kindnesse also from my Lady Mildmay & from others, whereof some have been meer strangers to me, the Lord reward them: It doth much incourage us to see, how the eyes & hearts of all good people are upon us, breathinge many sweet prayers & blessings after us. Comende my hearty love to all our friends, I cannot now name them, but thou knowest whom I meane. Nowe I beseech the Lord & father of mercy to blesse thee & all thy compayne, my daughter W: Ma: Mat: Sam: Deane, & the little one unknowne, Tho: Am: * & the rest: Tell Am: I am very much beholdinge to her brother, desire her to give him thanks for me: tell my n: Culroke I am beholdinge to his sonne in lawe for oysters he sent me, but could not see him to give him thankes. My deare wife farewell, once againe let us kisse & imbrace, so in teares of great Affection I rest

“ Thine ever

“ Jo : WINTHROP.”

* “The persons indicated by *Tho:* and *Am:* were undoubtedly his servants Thomas and Amy. The others, previously alluded to, were Henry's wife, his own daughter Mary, Martha Fones (afterwards the wife of his son John), and his sons Samuel and Deane.”

On the very day on which this letter was written, Winthrop went down to Southampton to embark for his new home, leaving his wife, his eldest son, and the younger members of the family, to follow in the spring or summer of the next year. But the little fleet had not yet arrived; and so late as the 29th of March, the day with which "The History of New England" opens, most of the vessels were not ready for sea. Nevertheless, on that day Winthrop set sail from the Cowes, as it was then called, in the "Arbella," a ship of three hundred and fifty tons, accompanied by three other ships, the "Talbot," the "Ambrose," and the "Jewell." Their progress, however, was much hindered by storms and adverse winds; and it was not until the 10th of April that they passed the Lizard, and the emigrants took their last lingering look of their old home.

We have thus briefly traced, under the guidance of his accomplished descendant, the personal history of the new Governor, from his birth in an obscure hamlet, now visited by the traveller only from respect to the memory of its illustrious son, through a not very eventful life, down to the period when he bade a final adieu to Old England to become the first man in New England; and have endeavored to show by what influences his character was formed, and under what circumstances his youth and early manhood were passed. If from this point we look back over the first forty years of his life, we shall find abundant reason to rejoice that the chief duty of governing the infant colony was intrusted to such a man. In every relation which he had hitherto been called to sustain, he had preserved an unblemished reputation; and to his growing experience he had added a continually widening influence. A faithful husband, a kind father, an upright magistrate, and a sincere and humble Christian, he had at all times shown himself equal to the demands which the occasion made on him. The courage and the magnanimity, the moderation and the firmness, the forgetfulness of his own interests in his anxiety for the public welfare, and the readiness to forgive personal injuries, by which his course as Governor of the Massachusetts Colony were marked, were only the natural fruits of his previous training and culture. In the full vigor of manhood,

with a mature judgment, a character formed under the best influences, and a various experience, he was placed at the head of an enterprise which required the exercise of all his powers for its successful prosecution. If his physical organization had been less vigorous, or his judgment less ripe, if the religious element had not entered so largely into his character, or if he had had less acquaintance with human nature, the new colony would scarcely have been so early or so firmly established.

From the day on which the "Arbella" left the shores of England, his life becomes a part of the public history of this country, and its details have been often written. In "The History of New England" he has raised a durable monument to his own memory; and in the learned pages of Bancroft and Palfrey, and in the writings of other historians of lesser fame, he holds a conspicuous and honorable place. But on the examination of this part of his career we do not now purpose to enter. Within the last twelve months, new and important light has been shed on the subject by the publication, under the auspices of the Massachusetts Historical Society, of a volume containing several hundred inedited letters, addressed either to John Winthrop or to John Winthrop, Jr., by Cradock, Hugh Peters, Winslow, Endicott, Roger Williams, and others; and one or two more volumes of a similar character may be looked for from the same source. We have also the promise of another volume of the "Life and Letters," which will include considerable new material, and bring the narrative down to his death,—a period of nearly twenty years. Until these materials are available for use, it is scarcely advisable to attempt a new examination of Governor Winthrop's public life; and we therefore reserve what we wish to say on this subject, and a general estimate of his character, for some future opportunity. If the papers and letters hereafter to be published are only half as important and instructive as those now brought to light, our readers will have no occasion to regret the delay.